

FEBRUARY 29, 1976

SOVIET CONGRESS-- WHO'S WHO

INTRO: SOME FIVE THOUSAND SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS ARE ASSEMBLED IN MOSCOW FOR THE PARTY'S TWENTY-FIFTH CONGRESS. FOR A REPORT ON WHO MAKES UP THIS GROUP, HERE IS VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS IN MOSCOW.

TEXT: THE PARTY NEWSPAPER PRAVDA, IN ONE REPORT ON THE CONGRESS, DESCRIBES THE FIVE THOUSAND COMMUNISTS MEETING IN THE KREMLIN AS "THE BEST OF THE BEST," THE ELITE OF THE PARTY'S FIFTEEN MILLION THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND MEMBERS. ABOUT ONE OF EVERY TEN WORKING SOVIET ADULTS IS A MEMBER OF THE PARTY, AND THE ONES CHOSEN TO ATTEND THE CONGRESS HAVE BEEN SINGLE OUT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

THE SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP AUTOMATICALLY, OF COURSE, DOMINATES THE CONGRESS. THAT INCLUDES PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV, AND THE REMAINDER OF THE FIFTEEN-MAN POLITBURO AND THE LARGER CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

THE DELEGATIONS HERE ALSO INCLUDE THE REPUBLIC REGIONAL CITY PARTY COMMITTEE--POWERFUL MEN IN THEIR OWN DISTRICTS, WHO MAKE UP WHAT IS CALLED THE PARTY APPARATUS--THE FULL-TIME STAFF THAT LARGELY RUNS THE COUNTRY IN A CHAIN OF COMMAND, WHICH STARTS IN MOSCOW AND EXTENDS TO THE SMALLEST PARTY CELL IN FACTORIES AND ON FARMS.

ALSO REPRESENTED HERE ARE POWERFUL SOVIET INSTITUTIONS--THE GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, THE MILITARY, THE SECRET POLICE AND THE SCIENCE AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS.

AND FINALLY, EVERY CONGRESS INCLUDES A GOOD NUMBER OF EXEMPLARY WORKERS--MINERS, MILKMAIDS, COLLECTIVE FARM CHAIRMEN AND FACTORY LABORERS. ALL OF THEM COME HERE WEARING MEDALS AWARDED FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE FOR LEADING THEIR CO-WORKERS TO HIGHER, MORE EFFICIENT PRODUCTION.

NEARLY EIGHT HUNDRED DELEGATES HOLD THE HERO OF SOCIALIST LABOR MEDAL AND SIXTY-SEVEN--INCLUDING SECRETARY BREZHNEV HIMSELF--THE SELECT HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION AWARD. NEARLY TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY HAVE BEEN AWARDED LENIN OR STATE PRIZES.

THIS IS A MIDDLE-AGED GROUP, THIS CONGRESS OF SOVIET COMMUNISTS. SIXTY PERCENT ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF THIRTY-FIVE AND FIFTY, AND ABOUT EIGHTY PERCENT JOINED THE PARTY AFTER WORLD WAR TWO. THE SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP FALLS IN MINORITY CATEGORIES--THOSE WHO ARE SIXTY OR OLDER AND DATE THEIR PARTY MEMBERSHIP BACK TO THE NINETEEN TWENTIES AND THIRTIES.

NOT MUCH IS REVEALED ABOUT THE INTERNAL WORKINGS OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY. OFFICIAL REPORTS AT THE PARTY CONGRESS REFER TO PARTY INCOME AND EXPENDITURES, BUT THERE ARE NO TOTAL FIGURES GIVEN ON THE PARTY BUDGET. THE PARTY'S PUBLISHING PLANTS PRODUCE ALMOST FOUR HUNDRED NEWSPAPERS AND NEARLY THREE HUNDRED PERIODICALS--THESE YIELDING INCOME IN ADDITION TO THE DUES THAT EACH PARTY MEMBER PAYS.

IT HAS BEEN REVEALED HERE BY SECRETARY BREZHNEV THAT ALMOST THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE WERE OUSTED FROM THE PARTY --TO ELIMINATE THOSE DESCRIBED AS THE CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT FROM THE RANKS. (SIGNED)

HCA/GSS/RMC